

Message Text

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47

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 PM-09 L-03 NSC-10 CIAE-00

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS BAMA KO 1019

E. O. 11652 N/ A

TAGS: EAID, ML

SUBJECT: DROUGHT SITUATION IN MALI: NORTHWEST AREA

REF: BAMA KO 1010

1. FOLLOWING IS ACCOUNT OF CONDITIONS IN DROUGHT AREA OF WESTERN MALI SOUTH OF MAURITANIAN BORDER FROM KAYES EAST TO NIGER RIVER WHICH WAS VISITED BY FSO KENNETH TORP MARCH 25-28. THIS NORMALLY VERY DRY SAHELIAN AREA, A TRANSITIONAL ZONE BETWEEN THE DESERT AND BETTER- WATERED AGRICULTURAL LANDS TO SOUTH IS IN IMMINENT DANGER OF RUNNING OUT OF GRAIN. LAST YEAR MANY AREAS (CIRCLES OF YELIMANE, NIORO, NARA) HAD ABSOLUTELY NO MILLET CROP, WHILE NORMALLY SURPLUS AREAS FURTHER TO SOUTH, EVEN RICH OFFICE DU NIGER, HAD ONLY 25 PER CENT OF NORMAL CROP. THUS, FARMERS WILL HAVE TO BE FED IN MANY PARTS THIS REGION, SINCE THEY HAVE EXHAUSTED NORMAL ONE YEAR SECURING SUPPLY. FURTHER UNCLASSIFIED

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SOUTH FARMERS WILL BE ABLE TO FEED THEMSELVES BUT WILL NOT HAVE ENOUGH GRAIN TO SELL TO MAURITANIANS. RESIDENTS OF KAYES, MALI'S SECOND CITY, KITA, NIORO, NARA AND OTHER SMALL TOWNS MUST ALSO ALWAYS BE PROVIDED WITH GRAIN STOCKS.

2. NORTH- WESTERN DROUGHT BELT OF MALI IS AREA INTO WHICH VERY HIGH PERCENTAGE MAURITANIA'S NOMADIC POPULATION (EXCEPT THE VERY OLD AND SICK) MIGRATE EVERY YEAR WITH THEIR HERDS UNDER AGREEMENT BY WHICH MAURITANIANS TREATED WITH FULL EQUALITY TO MALIANS. THIS YEAR THERE TWO DIFFERENCES IN MOVEMENT OF MAURITANIANS: ALMOST EVERYONE IN EASTERN MAURITANIA INCLUDING TOWNSPEOPLE AND ITS FEW SEDENTARY FARMERS HAVE MOVED WEST OR, MORE OFTEN, SOUTH INTO MALI AND ARE BEING FED FROM MALIAN GOVERNMENT STOCKS. THIS LARGER THAN USUAL MOVEMENT NECESSARY BECAUSE WELLS DRY. HOWEVER, INSTEAD OF STOPPING IN NIONO- NARA AREA, MOST HERDSMEN HAVE MOVED FURTHER SOUTH IN SEARCH OF PASTURAGE.

WHERE FORMERLY LOTS OF MAURITANIAN TENTS SEEN ON EDGE OF NORTHERN TOWN (BAMAKO 807), NOW VERY FEW SEEN.

3. FOOD DISTRIBUTION IN FIRST REGION HAS BEEN EXTREMELY WELL- ORGANIZED BY FIRST REGION GOVERNOR DANFAKHA AND ALMOST EQUALLY WELL BY GOVERNORS OF SECOND AND FOURTH REGIONS. THEY AND OTHER CIVIL SERVANTS PLUS OPAM CADRES REALIZE THEIR CAREER AT STAKE, AND THERE IS A MILITARY PRECISION AND SENSE OF URGENCY TO GRAIN DISTRIBUTION OPERATION NOT ALWAYS SEEN HERE. WEST GERMAN PLANES HAVE BEEN OF IMPORTANT HELP IN SUPPLYING NIORO. CROWDED AND DIFFICULT- TO- REACH NARA CIRCLE IS HARDEST HIT AND IN SHORTEST SUPPLY OF FOOD. THUS FAR PRINCIPAL GRAIN DISTRIBUTED IN THESE CIRCLES HAS BEEN 4,000 TONS OF AMERICAN SORGHUM. IT ARRIVED IN JANUARY JUST WHEN SUPPLIES RAN OUT, AND THUS ACHIEVED MAXIMUM PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT. DROUGHT VICTIMS HAVE SOME FAITH IN GOM'S PROMISE TO PROVIDE FOOD AND THEY KNOW GRAIN IS AMERICAN. PRESENTLY, HOWEVER, THERE NO STOCKS AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION. HERE MORE THAN IN SAHEL AREAS PEOPLE KNOW WAREHOUSES EMPTY AND ANXIOUS WAITING PERVADES ATMOSPHERE. GRAIN NEEDS TO BE DELIVERED NOW TO AVOID HUNGER, BUT IT MAY TAKE SEVERAL WEEKS TO GET GRAIN TO KAYES IF FIRST PRIORITY IS, AS CONSIDERED LIKELY, GIVEN TO BAMAKO. QUANTITY NEEDED TO CARRY THIS PART OF MAXIMUM DROUGHT AREA (ADMINISTRATIVELY DIVIDED AMONG THREE REGIONS) IS 25,000 MT TO NEXT HARVEST. GRAIN REQUIREMENTS FOR JUNE- SEPTEMBER MUST BE DELIVERED IN JUNE EXCEPT IN ZONE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF RAILROAD, BECAUSE

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RAINY SEASON MAKES ROAD IMPASSABLE.

4. CATTLE SITUATION OF NORTHWESTERN DROUGHT ZONE IN BETTER
SHAPE THAN IN NIGER RIVER AREA BECAUSE MALIAN CATTLE AND
MAURITANIAN HERDS, WHICH USUALLY WINTER IN THIS AREA, HAVE
MOVED SOUTH. NOT HAVING USUALLY LUSH NIGER RIVER MEADOWS
TO FALL BACK ON, MOST MALIANS AND MAURITANIANS DECIDED NOT
TO TAKE CHANCES AND GOT OUT WHILE THERE STILL SOME GRASS AND
WATER. IN LIMITED AREAS PARTICULARLY ALONG SENEGAL RIVER,
HERDSMEN MISJUDGED GRASS SUPPLY- AND- DEMAND AND ARE AS RESULT
LOSING THEIR HERDS.

BLAKE

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